

War on Terror

We live in extraordinary times. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were a painful illustration of America's vulnerability to international terrorism. We were forced to confront the fact that America's enemies are willing to go to great lengths to destroy us, and in an increasingly globalized world, they have the means to inflict mass casualties.

I supported the President's decision to take the war on terror to the terrorists. I believe that our actions in Iraq and in Afghanistan are making the world safer. It is better to battle the terrorists on the streets of Baghdad or Kabul than on the streets of New York or Minneapolis. Al Qaeda is on the run, thanks to the brave work of our men and women in uniform. We are forever in their debt.

Protecting Troops on the Battlefield

I believe we have a duty to stand behind our troops on the battlefield. I am proud of my vote for \$87 billion to make sure American troops fighting in Iraq have what they need to stay safe. I will continue to support our troops in whatever they need, from healthcare, to protective gear, to the finest training and equipment available on earth.

I have supported efforts by Minnesota defense companies to give our troops the very best technologies to keep them safe in battle, and I was pleased to secure over \$123 million for these Minnesota companies. This is on top of the \$80 million I was able to secure for Minnesota last year. I have helped our special operations troops

acquire ATVs, promoted medical equipment and research, and supported user-friendly technologies for surveillance planes, missile guidance, and advanced radars for ships—all of which mean more jobs here in Minnesota.

Coleman R&R Law Helps Troops Come Home

I was pleased in September 2003 the Pentagon announced a policy to bring American troops serving in Iraq or Afghanistan for a year or more home for two weeks of rest and recuperation.

I was proud to lead a bipartisan effort to make sure military families did not have to bear the cost of bringing their loved ones all the way home. My legislation, which became law on November 6, 2003, required the Pentagon to do the right thing and reimburse families for these costs. It is the least we can do for our men and women serving on the front lines against terror.



Fairness for Minnesota's Reservists

Now more than ever our reservists are stepping up to defend freedom, and they deserve to be treated equal to our regular forces. Toward that end, I have worked on issues that matter to reservists, such as:

- **Health care:** I was proud to co-author a provision to this year's defense authorization bill to expand access to TRICARE (the military health care system) for reservists and their families, and to permit the continuation of their civilian health care plans.

- **Making up Lost Income:** When reservists are called to active duty, many of them take a pay cut when compared with their civilian jobs. This only makes the hardship of separation more difficult for loved ones who are already coping with the absence of their spouses. Many employers in the State of Minnesota have made a decision to make up this lost income, and I applaud that. Other employers are not able to, however. That's why I have introduced legislation to give taxpayers an opportunity to voluntarily support our volunteer forces by designating that a portion of their tax return be used to make up this lost income for reservists. By helping our men and women called to duty to make their ends meet, my bill will support families and boost morale.

- **Retirement:** I was pleased to co-author a proposal that would make retirement for reservists more fair. It would link age of retirement with years of service, so that many of our longest-serving reservists could retire at age 55 rather than at age 60.

- **GI Bill:** I have also co-authored legislation to help reservists when it comes to the Montgomery GI Bill. When the GI bill was conceived, reservists were covered at 47 percent of the coverage level for active duty servicemen. That percentage has slipped to 27 percent. This legislation would restore the original ratio. Other legislation would change eligibility requirements so that more reservists would qualify for the GI bill.

Protecting our Borders

- **Responding to the**

9/11 Commission Report: As a member of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, I have been attending hearings this month regarding the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. The Senate Majority Leader has asked our Committee to report a bill to the full Senate floor by October 1. To accomplish this, I and other members have been listening to the views of Commission members, families of 9/11 victims, Administration officials, and Minnesotans like you.

- **Increasing Border Security:**

As Chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, I held my first hearing in Minnesota on border security. As a follow up, I am currently conducting an investigation into the Container Security Initiative, which seeks to secure the tens of thousands of cargo containers that arrive at our borders by rail, truck, ship, and air.

- **Helping Local First Responders:**

As a member of the Senate Committee on Governmental Relations I have worked to ensure that each State receives a baseline amount of federal assistance so that its first responders can be properly equipped and trained for all emergencies. As a result, last year Minnesota received almost \$60 million in grants for domestic preparedness and \$17.5 million in grants to fire fighters. And I'm pleased that for this year, Minnesota will receive \$39 million for counterterrorism efforts by our local and state law enforcement. On top of this, the Twin Cities will receive about \$20 million for urban security initiatives.

- **International Falls Training Facility:**

Together with other members of our delegation, I have pressed the Department of Homeland Security to designate International Falls as a federal training facility. The nation currently does not have a facility for training employees in cold weather. The International Falls project, developed by local leaders, would train people at a local community college, and offer them more appropriate training closer to home.

- **Integrated Communications Systems:**

A primary need among first responders is a communications system that is capable of linking all agencies at a response scene and connecting them to a number of databases with information that can help form a proper response. I have been working with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to obtain federal funding that would help design and implement such a system using current technology.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to support Minnesota's citizens and soldiers in the United States Senate. I will continue to work to make sure our troops have what they need to stay safe, that their families are provided for, and that America is safe and strong in the world."

U.S. SENATOR NORM COLEMAN

UNITED STATES SENATOR NORM COLEMAN

Working to Keep America Safe

"We live in the greatest country the world has ever known. We have built our nation on sure foundations of truth, freedom, justice and the dignity of every human person. But those values are not self-enforcing. They are only as valuable as the sacrifice that is offered to keep them."

U.S. SENATOR NORM COLEMAN

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